Iron County Register.

By ELI D. AKE.

IRONTON, : : : MISSOURI.

TO-DAY.

We dream bright dreams of to-morrow;
Our castles are built in air;
And with hues sublime of the coming, time
We paint us a picture fair.
But we never stop to consider
That the future flees away,
And that there is naught into being wrought
Unless it is wrought to-day.

To the cherished haunts of the old time
Our eyes are backward cast,
And a sweet voice calls through Memory's halls
To woo us unto the past.
But, however dear are the visions,
We do not dare to stay;
From out of the "gone" we must move on
To the duties that call to-day.

We've the "now" in which to labor!
We've the "now" in which to be!
And the "now" alone we can call our own
Throughout all eternity.
The past and the future are shadows,
But the present is ours for aye.
To us 'tis given to build our heaven
In the kingdom of to-day.
—J. A. Edgerton, in Orange Judd Farmer.

A HEROIC STRUGGLE

By CHARLES EUGENE BANKS

HUNDREDS of people knew Jack Golden, head salesman on the road for Brown, Tucker & Co., New York. A tireless and systematic worker, he was also possessed of a peculiar homely charm of manner that made the simplest truth seem wonderful when he related it. This virtue soon placed to his credit a large number of profitable accounts, besides winning for him a growing circle of warm personal friends and a liberal salary. It would seem that so many blessings should have made Jack Golden one of the happiest of men. And so he generally appeared to be. But there were times when he would become suddenly possessed of the most profound melancholy, and withdrawing himself from all he would give himself up to brooding over some real or fancied trouble.

These periods of gloom were of irregular lengths and differing degrees of intensity, but while they lasted Jack wrapped himself in an impenetrable cloak of reserve and was unapproachable to his most intimate friends.

The strange moods seemed to grow on him as time passed, recurring at shorter and shorter intervals, until, at last, he rarely joined in the pastimes which had once given him pleasure, but pursued an almost solitary course. Then he suddenly resigned his position with the simple statement that he was going away—where, he did not say, and no one had the temerity to ask. He was an enigma which his employers had long given up trying to solve.

And so he passed out of their lives, the house of Green, Tucker & Co. grew and broadened, their salesmen came and went, and Jack Golden was forgotten.

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Christmas Eve. Without, the snowflakes drifted down the quiet air like apple blossoms in the verdant spring. On every side were evidences of the spirit of giving; bundles piled in doorways; bundles in the arms of pedestrians—bundles everywhere. No, not everywhere. There was one room in the great city at the door of which no bundle had been laid. It was high up in an old weather-beaten building, with steep, drunken stairs, staring windows and crazy blinds. This door opened on a small, square room, with a little alcove at the back, shut off by cheap, chintz curtains. A narrow iron bed stood in a farther corner covered with a spread as white as the snow that fluttered against the dingy window-panes, and beside it a woman, holding in her thin, blue-veined hands the long, gaunt fingers of a sleeping man. She was thin and pale and continued watching, but a beautiful woman still, and her eyes bent upon the face before her were full of compassion and solicitude. The face of the man was mournfully sad, and the deep lines across the forehead and about the mouth told of great mental suffering.

The man awoke, slowly, as though it were an effort to raise the heavy eyelids under the beetling brows.

The woman gently stroked the wasted fingers, and bending her gaze steadily upon him, said slowly:

"Jack—dear old Jack—don't you know me?"

The light in his eyes shifted rapidly, the drawn lips twiched, but he only turned his head from side to side and fell to tracing designs with his finger on the coverlet.

"Listen, Jack," she continued earnestly; "I have come for you; we are going home, to the old home in the country where the air is clear and the sun shines almost always; you remember how bright the sun used to shine there, don't you, Jack?"

His lips moved and she bent over him so that she might catch his lightest whisper.

"I thought I heard music," he said faintly. "There it is again; the cry of a whippoorwill—it is faint and far away—but sweet—very sweet."

She pressed the thin fingers assuringly and went to the window and peered out into the night. Brave woman! How she fought the sobs back upon her heart.

Then returning to the bedside she took the sufferer's hands again in her own and began to sing softly:

"'Home again, home again, from a foreign shore,
And, oh, it fills my soul with joy to meet my friends once more.'"

The words floated on the air like a fragrance of old-fashioned flowers, and the man's eyes grew luminious with the sweet sounds.

She saw that she had caught his fancy and repeated the words over and over again while he regarded her fixedly. A storm broke without and the wind beat the frozen sleet against the windows and went shrieking around the corners of the old building like a horde of demons let loose from hell. A bell in a church tower rang out the hour of nine. He turned suddenly on his pillow and clutched her arm convulsively, muttered:

"Don't you hear them! don't you hear them! the bells! the bells! They are coming to take me away—but they shall not—you will not let them—you have promised a hundred times, and you will not break your word."

He struggled to a sitting posture and his gaunt, wasted form, trembling with fear, was weird enough to appal the stoutest heart.

"No, no, Jack, they shall not take you away from me—no one shall do that. It was only the church clock striking the hour. They are ringing no bells for you. No one shall harm you; I would not let them. Trust me, Jack; I have been here with you so long; do you know how long I have been with you? Can't you think? Can't you remember?"

The tones of her voice soothed him to quietness and he lay still. "Jack," she began again, slowly: "Jack, I am going to ask you a question, and I want you to answer me. It is very important, Jack. Do you know what night this is? Try and remember. It is a night you used to love. It is Christmas eve, Jack; Christmas eve."

"Christ's evening," he murmured, dreamily; "the night for telling stories—stories of home and love. Did we not once tell stories on this night?"

"Yes, Jack, yes, and we two will tell a story together. Once upon a time, Jack—that's the way we always began our stories—you haven't forgotten, Jack?"

She was having a hard struggle, this brave-souled woman. A man's reason was in the balance and a single word might win or lose it. The demons of the storm shrieked and tore at the shutters as though they would get in and fight against her for the man's soul. It was a slender woman pitted against the fates. She realized this, but went on bravely. "Once on a time, Jack, there was a grand old forest, and through it wound a shining river, and in its recesses was a beautiful lake." The intense earnestness of her voice, and the frequent repetition of his name, arrested his attention, and he seemed to follow her. Something like the gleam of consciousness came into his eyes. She looked at him steadily and continued: "And there were green hills and wide meadows and an old rambling house—"

"And the grass was thick and soft and green on either side."

True, Jack; see how you are helping me with the story? And on one side of the gate grew a lilac that bloomed early and gave to spring its sweetest fragrance; on the other side a lofty pine—"

"The blackbirds sang in its branches all day long."

He said this so quietly and with such seeming faith in his recollection that even she, who was striving with all her strength for this result, was startled. Then hope leaped in her heart; her eyes shone with renewed light and the warm blood stirred and kindled in her bosom.

"There was a spring at the foot of the slope," he continued.

"Yes, yes."

"And just above it grew a pollard willow."

"Oh, God, I thank Thee!"

The nervous, strident quaver had gone from his voice and he spoke with the calm assurance of one who is moving over familiar ground. "I remember a narrow path that led down from the house to the spring and in the early summer mornings the grass that bordered it was lit like a million diamonds where the dewdrops were kissed by the sun."

"It was all very cheerful and bright and—and—" She could say no more. The tears would flow with another utterance. She must not weep now, and yet her joy was so intense that she felt if she did not that she should die.

"It was a pretty place, Jack," she forced herself to say, "and there were some who used to run up and down the path trying to count the jewels."

"Three," he said, confidently; "two boys and a girl. One of the boys was slight, with hair like gold and great blue eyes that seemed always to look beyond the hills into another world. The other was a sturdy lad with thick, dark hair that fell in wavy masses round his sun-burned face. They called him Jack."

"True, true; go on. The third, the girl—can you remember what she was like, Jack?"

They seemed to have changed places, the brain-sick man and the brave, patient woman, for she was now all agitation while he was cool and self-possessed. She used all her strength to appear calm, lest he should notice her excitement and lose himself again. She must lead him on.

"The other, Jack, the girl—have you forgotten her?"

"I have never forgotten her," he said, the light in his eyes softening. "She has been with me always. She was the constant playmate of the boys and gave her favors to both alike. The three were cousins, but she was loved by both with more than cousins' love."

"No, no," she cried, with sudden vehemence, "not both."

She was a woman now with all a woman's love, with all a woman's weakness, while he was growing stronger with every moment, drinking the wine of memory.

"One loved her, I know," he said; "and Jack was—"

"Was you," she prompted; "you. And the girl—"

"Was you."

"Yes, yes; but let us go on with the story." She was trembling like a leaf in a storm. He seemed to partake of her intensity, and continued, speaking rapidly.

"The story shall be finished. We used to take long walks—we two—through shady lanes, by running brooks, in which the long lush grasses trailed their shining blades—used to sit for hours under trees that clasped leafy hands above us and whispered secrets we tried so hard to catch, but could never quite understand. But there was a secret that I learned, and after that the world was desolate."

Her face was buried in the pillow, his cheek pressed against his. She was so still she did not seem to breathe. The turning point in the trial had come. His reason hung upon the next word he might utter. She could do nothing but pray.

"One day," he cried, with a ring of bitterness in his voice, "I came across a letter hidden among some old papers. It was addressed to me in the handwriting of my father. I broke the seal and read the awful words: 'God pity you, my son. Take no woman to wife. Madness is in your blood. You are of the third generation, since the appearance of the curse, and are fated to be the victim. It has been so for hundreds of years. I have sinned beyond forgiveness in bringing you into the world to suffer. Do not follow in my footsteps. Harden your heart; take no woman to wife, that the race may die with you.' I sat all night with that awful heritage in my hand. Over all there spread an inky cloud and on it written in letters of blood I read the one word, 'Madness.' Down the road I fled, down from the dear old home—out, out into the world of which I knew so little, caring nothing whither I went so that I might forget. I worked that I might not think, and lived on, but ever before my eyes hung that awful word."

Her arm crept lovingly around his neck, but she did not look up nor speak. She did not dare disturb the thread of his recollection, and yet she feared to have him go on. She prayed with that intensity of soul which is the offspring of hope and despair. Her petition was like the worship of a flower, unheard but all-pervading. The man seemed to feel its influence and continued:

"I tried with all my strength to banish that horror from my mind. Sometimes I thought I had succeeded, but a chance word would bring it back again. At last I felt the prophecy was to be fulfilled and I sent you a letter telling you I know not what, and them—"

"And then we came to find you; our cousin Claude and I, as we could only come—I in the flesh, he in the spirit, for he had died with a confession on his lips and a prayer for your forgiveness."

"Forgiveness?"

"Yes, Jack, for he had most cruelly wronged you. The letter you read was not written by your father, but by your cousin. You can guess why he did it, Jack. It was wicked, cruel, but he suffered——"

Jack raised his hand and put a trembling finger to her lips. The shifting light was gone from his eyes, and in its place was the peaceful, happy glow of trusting contentment.

"Say no more of him," he said gently "Tell me of yourself."

She turned her face aside, but he could see the rich blood leap up her throat and turn her cheeks to crimson.

"The old place was not the same after you went away, Jack. We talked of little else but your strange disappearance. Then Claude fell sick, and when he knew he could not live he told us of the deceit and pleaded to be forgiven. Then we waited for some word that would guide us to you and lift from your mind that awful shadow. At last your letter came, so filled with wild forebodings that I resolved to find you. Providence was my guide, but oh, Jack!"

She buried her blushing face in the pillow close to his own pale cheek, and wept tears of love and thankfulness. The bells in the steeple rang out the hour of 12, and it was Christmas morning.

SHOES AT $1,000 A PAIR.

Physician Cobbler of New York Who Has Stuck to His Last to Some Purpose.

Shoes selling at $1,000 a pair are the product of a factory in New York.

To style it a shop would be to insult the artisans employed therein.

They call it a "footgear institute," and the proprietor goes by no less a title than "curative orthopedist," says the New York Herald.

The wearing of these $1,000 shoes is in the main, a hobby, and is based on nerves gone wrong.

For there are some persons, it seems, who are plagued with sensitive nerves in their feet which ache so excruciatingly that nothing can assuage the pain but shoes "prescribed" by a physician-cobbler.

The learned cobbler listens to a tale of the ache, with attending nervous disturbances, and examines the patient's feet with critical scrutiny.

Every hill and dale of the foot is inspected and studied, and especially is a sharp lookout kept for the sensitive nerves, which ultimately are sure to be found.

A volume of notes is taken and the prospective customer naturally becomes impressed with the severity of his ailment.

Next, and what is very important, a plaster cast of the foot is taken, and if the patient's purse is proportioned to his plaint the physician-cobbler is apt to enter a new order in his book.

TO 'PHONE TO LONDON.

Expected That It Will Be Feasible to Converse Between England and America Within a Year.

Prophecy is a dangerous thing, but with a full realization of its pitfalls a London correspondent ventures the following prediction: Within three months, probably before New Year's, direct telegraphic communication without intermediate repeating stations will be established for the first time between New York and London, and telegrams will be exchanged with a speed of more than four times the previous capacity of any cable.

He says he is tempted to go a step farther and express the strong expectation that within a year it will be as feasible to converse by telephone between New York and London as it is across Manhattan.

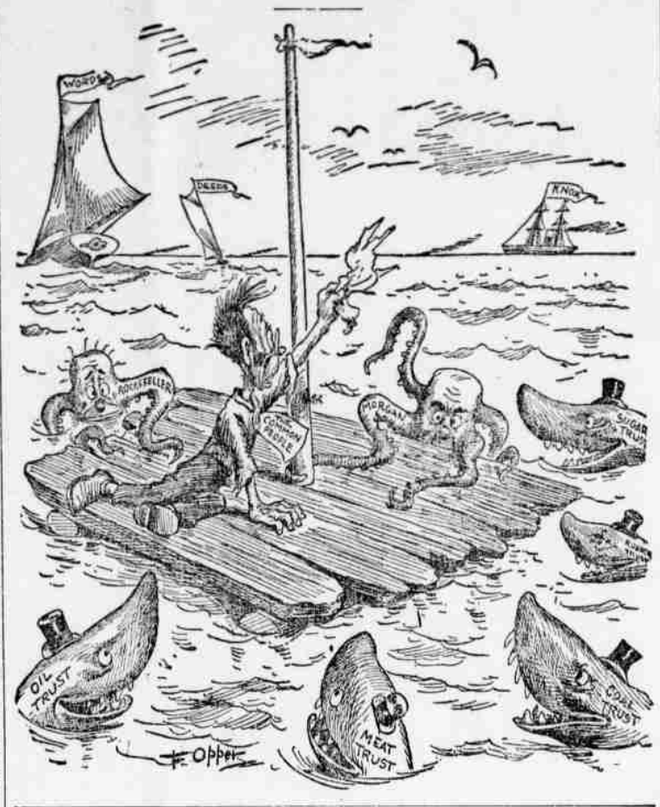
Perhaps it is well to confess that it is easy to prophecy when you know.

The feat of rapid communication between London and New York, as a matter of fact, has been greatly surpassed recently in actual practice.

The problem of cheap, rapid, long-distance communication has been solved, and the credit for this signal triumph of modern science belongs to England.

When the permission of the inventors is obtained, more than this general announcement will be made.

THE CASTAWAY.



REPUBLICANS AND BOODLE.

Thorough Renovation Demanded and Necessary in the Federal Service.

Such meager accounts of the department swindles as have heretofore filtered into the press have but poorly served to prepare the public mind for Bristow's revelations, and the sense of shock is keen and profound. The extent and character of graft as disclosed by the report is almost stupefying, and were it not for the fact that the public is accustomed to the idea of millions, the mere numerical magnitude would be difficult of comprehension. Fifteen years ago "millions of graft" would have been almost unintelligible, says the St. Louis Republic.

That graft in one department alone has been on a scale to justify the employment of 40 inspectors for six months in investigating it is a suggestive fact which assists the imagination to grasp the truth. And that the system discovered has been developing through two administrations, extending its ramifications and perfecting its operations, undisturbed save by superficial examinations, is another poignant fact. And President Roosevelt's expressions, such as "gross corruption," "bribery and blackmail," "fleecing the public," give further color and suggestion to the great melancholy fact.

Unquestionably the principal significance of Mr. Bristow's report is to confirm the belief that graft is deep-rooted in practically every department of executive business and to strengthen the public conviction that the only way to cure it effectually is to apply the wholesale cure of the ballot. Mr. Roosevelt's own comments make legitimate and proper the discussion of the scandal's political phase at this time. Obviously he seeks thus early to anticipate and avoid the political effect of the disclosure.

In discussing the matter of cure, he says: "All questions of difference in party policy sink into insignificance when the people of the country are brought face to face with a question like this." Assuredly such differences ought to sink unless they are vital to the cure itself. If they militated against the thoroughgoing renovation obviously demanded and conceded to be necessary in the federal service they ought to be ignored by the people.

But what are the "differences" and how do they affect reform? The democratic party insists upon a final and complete overhauling of the service and the utter demolition of graft. The republican party has put itself in the attitude of defense upon the issue of reform. From the outset it has been an apologist, seeking on the one hand to excuse corruption which was revealed, denying party responsibility therefor, and on the other hand denying that extensive graft existed. Not until investigations and exposures became inevitable, perforce of public insistence, did the administration act, and its progressions in the work have been marked by reluctance and by sullenness toward the public. For the partial results actually achieved the administration deserves credit, but no amount of reform activity henceforth can change the fact of its early attitude upon the scandals. It has sought to make a virtue of necessity; of which the people are duly cognizant. It now admits the extent and character of the frauds—those only, however, of which the nation is already fully informed—and vigorously proclaims that reform is necessary. The "difference" to which Mr. Roosevelt refers relates to the question of which party is better calculated to accomplish the work.

It is equally difficult to believe that the republican party if retained in power and left to its own devices would seriously disturb the present conditions of federal service; and to comprehend how a wholesale renovation, consequent upon a change of administration, could fail to produce the desired result. Let the republican party be judged by its "reform" record.

Tremor of Mysterious Source.

Why is there so much discouragement in the republican party? Why is it that so many republicans, including not a few who are in more or less prominent official positions, are despondent over the outlook for 1904? We give out no secret nor do we stretch the truth in the slightest degree when we assert that a feeling of gloomy apprehension is more common among republicans than cheerful confidence. What is there in the situation to warrant all this? A study of the present status of parties as indicated by election returns of all the states shows that nothing less than a landslide can bring in the democracy. But more than one landslide has come in that party's direction, and the republicans—or a great many of them—seem to feel that another incident of that kind impends.—Washington Post.

TARIFF REDUCED WAGES.

Cost of Living Increases While the Workingman's Pay Decreases.

Thirty-two thousand operatives in the cotton mills of New England have had their wages cut 10 per cent. and they do not view lower wages and high cost of living as prosperity for them whatever it may be for the protected trusts. Then again the employes of the American Tinplate company—part of the steel trust—have returned to work at a 20 per cent. reduction of their wages and they do not feel prosperous. If the republican party had permitted the amendment to the Cuban reciprocity bill abolishing the differential—extra duty—on refined sugar, the saving of $7,000,000 or $8,000,000 to the cotton and tinplate operatives, and other consumers, would have helped to tide over the long cold winter that has just begun. But the sugar trust was more influential with republican congressmen than the people and by taking off 20 per cent. of the duty on Cuban raw sugar they presented the sugar trust with the opportunity to make, as increased profit, almost to a dollar what the people would have saved by the abolishing of the extra duty on refined sugar, which the democratic amendment proposed to abolish. The leaders of this same republican congress have agreed with President Roosevelt that reciprocity for the sugar trust and the Cubans was the most important legislation that was necessary and they have further agreed that no reform of the tariff in its shelter to the trusts is needed. With no reduction or abolition of tariff taxes the numerous trusts, that are protected like the sugar trust, can continue to extort their enormous profits. If the tariff taxes were reduced to a reasonable figure, enough to produce what the government needs, honestly administered, the trusts would have to reduce their profits to corresponding rates, or competition from abroad would come in and supply the market. That most of the trusts are able to make ample profits without any protective tariff is shown by their exporting their products to foreign countries and selling them in competition with the foreign manufacturers after paying the high duties which are demanded there. In many instances it has been proven that, the price the trusts obtain abroad are much less than they charge our own people.

If the trusts were making no profit on the goods they export, they would not long continue such business, or be so anxious to extend this trade, by sending agents to increase it, so the excuse that the trusts are losing money on the goods they are selling in foreign markets, or dumping their surplus for whatever it will bring, is not borne out by the facts. The trusts, like other people, would not continue to do a losing business and be seeking more at the same unprofitable rate. The steel trust is bidding on foreign contracts against the English, German, French and Belgium manufacturers, and successfully, too, at 33 per cent. less on some of its products. To enable it to compete with the foreigners on their own ground, it reduced the wages of its employes, but does not lower the price of its products at home. The workmen, the farmers and the balance of us would all be better off, if the tariff was reduced and competition was allowed to keep the trust prices down. If the cost of living was reduced one-third, the workmen could afford to labor for less wages and what a blessing the lower cost of living would be to those with limited incomes. The farmer would get the same price for what he raises under as low as he does under a high tariff, because the price of agricultural products are based upon supply and demand and no tariff can change that immutable law and the farmer has no protection to aid him except the duty on wool and that has proven to be a boomerang. The wholesale and retail dealers make a larger percentage of profits the cheaper they can buy the goods they sell, so they would gain by tariff reduction. The whole army of those who work for wages, be the wages large or small, are benefited by a reasonable price for all they buy. The high tariff adds to those prices directly and in a much greater proportion through the increased profits the trusts and protected monopolies charge under the shelter of high protection. The republican masses feel that protection is robbing them and are protesting, the "Iowa Idea" being a sample protest, but the republican leaders have succeeded in putting even that small effort to sleep.

——Almost any respectable democrat might be elected if he stood on a platform guaranteeing economy, honesty, tariff reform, sound money, national good faith, and in general the recovery of the country from republican extravagance, corruption and imperialism.—N. Y. Post (Ind.).

Saved by Frost.

"I hear," said Hi Tragedy, "that while you were playing in one of the western towns a fire broke out in the theater."

"Yes," replied Lowe Comedy, "and there might have been a horrible panic but for one thing."

"What was that?"

"There weren't enough people in the audience to create one."—Tit-Bits.

Asked and Answered.

"Why is it?" asked the jolly party, that you are always borrowing trouble?"

"Because," answered the melancholy individual, "it is the only thing I can borrow without security."—Chicago Daily News.

Charity and personal force are the only investments worth anything.—Walt Whitman.